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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD,
ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION,
FOREIGN AGRICULTURE, AND HORTICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK, DAIRY,
AND POULTRY

July 25, 2023

The Honorable Glenn “GT” Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman, Committee on
Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable David Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
Ranking Member, Committee on
Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Scott,

As the House Committee on Agriculture begins drafting the 2023 Farm Bill, I request that specific policies and programs be prioritized. We have an excellent opportunity to address the many challenges facing American agriculture. A once-in-a-century pandemic revealed critical gaps in our food supply chain and emphasized the importance of safety net programs that support families in need. In addition, persistent inflation has led to tighter margins for farmers, particularly smaller operations like those in the Fifth District of Connecticut. To tackle these problems, I urge the prioritization of the following issues:

Nutrition

Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)

In the United States of America, over 40 million people rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to feed themselves and their families, including over 35,500 households in the Fifth Congressional District of Connecticut. SNAP is a highly responsive, means-tested program that gives stability to millions of families in need and is considered one of our most effective anti-poverty tools. However, like the farm support programs, which spend more money when commodity prices are low, SNAP spending must increase when the need is high. Therefore, the 2023 Farm Bill must expand eligibility for SNAP and decry any effort to undermine this vital program.

SNAP benefits are based on the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), which estimates the cost for a family of four to eat a healthy diet on a budget. Before the 2018 Farm Bill, the Thrifty Food Plan was last updated by Congress in 2006. Evidence consistently showed benefit levels were too low to provide for a realistic, healthy diet, even with households contributing additional funds toward groceries. Specifically, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study found that before the

2021 Thrifty Food Plan assessment, nearly nine out of ten SNAP participants reported facing barriers to achieving a healthy diet. The most common barrier was the cost of healthy foods.¹

In the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress directed USDA to re-evaluate the Thrifty Food Plan by 2022 and every five years thereafter. Based on the 2021 evaluation with current food prices, food composition data, consumption patterns, and dietary guidance, SNAP beneficiaries received, on average, \$36.24 more per person per month.² Therefore, I urge the Committee to keep the reevaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan as part the 2023 Farm Bill and explore transitioning to the Low-Cost Food Plan.

Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE)

Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) is a critical state flexibility that allows SNAP administrators to ensure the program aligns with similar means-tested anti-poverty programs, like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), targeted to the lowest-income Americans. This ensures efficient program administration and helps to prevent a benefit cliff that would otherwise be present for SNAP recipients who work additional hours or see a slight increase in earnings. BBCE participants can save for the future and earn more at work while still getting support from SNAP.³ Therefore, the 2023 Farm Bill must protect BBCE to ensure SNAP recipients can increase their earnings and save for unexpected expenses without facing harsh benefit cliffs.

Eliminating Lifetime SNAP Ban for Drug Felons

In the 2023 Farm Bill, Congress has the opportunity to address the lifetime SNAP ban for drug felons. Despite completing their sentences, formerly incarcerated individuals are often prevented from accessing food assistance, making them vulnerable to hunger and recidivism. Formerly incarcerated individuals with prior drug offenses are reincarcerated at rates up to 50 percent⁴ due to the barriers and discrimination they face in accessing employment, housing, and food, and an estimated 91% are food insecure.⁵ The 2023 Farm Bill must include language that will eliminate the lifetime ban on SNAP.

¹ Maeve Gearing, Megan Lewis, Claire Wilson, Carla Bozzolo, and Dani Hansen. *Barriers that Constrain the Adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Allotments: In-depth Interview Findings*. Report prepared by Westat, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, June 2021. Project Officer Rosemarie Downer. Available online at www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis

² U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021, August 16). *USDA modernizes the Thrifty Food Plan, updates SNAP benefits*. Food and Nutrition Service U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0179.21>

³ Rosenbaum, D. (2019, July 30). *SNAP's "broad-based categorical eligibility" supports working families ...* Food Assistance . Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-24-19fa.pdf>

⁴ United States Sentencing Commission. (2017, February 17). *The past predicts the future: Criminal history and recidivism of ...* Recidivism Among Federal Drug Trafficking Offenders. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2017/20170309_Recidivism-CH.pdf

⁵ Wang, E. A., Zhu, G. A., Evans, L., Carroll-Scott, A., Desai, R., & Fiellin, L. E. (2013, April). *A pilot study examining food insecurity and HIV risk behaviors among individuals recently released from prison*. AIDS education and prevention : official publication of the International Society for AIDS Education. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3733343/>

International Food Assistance

After decades of progress, global hunger is on the rise. Vulnerable communities have seen their food systems eroded by compounding shocks like conflict, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, an acute global food crisis is spiraling, driven by the war in Ukraine. As many as 828 million people worldwide faced chronic hunger last year, 46 million more than the prior year and 150 million more than in 2019. Moreover, 45 million people are estimated to be at risk of death or facing starvation because they have too little to eat.⁶ This tragedy is setting the stage for continuing national security crisis. Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole, Food for Peace, Farmer to Farmer, and other Title III programs are critical for fighting world hunger. Congress must fully fund these programs in the 2023 Farm Bill and ensure that programs in countries with political conflict, like Haiti, are prioritized.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Throughout the pandemic, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has helped supplement the diets of low-income people by providing emergency American-grown food at no cost. This program allows States to give local organizations such as food banks, faith-based groups, soup kitchens, and food pantries that directly serve the public. Unfortunately, amid layoffs and unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for emergency food brought local organizations to the brink. While many were able to fill the community's immediate needs, the charitable sector cannot solve hunger alone. Therefore, the 2023 Farm Bill should increase funding for TEFAP and removing the state match requirement. Congress must also advocate for increased funding for TEFAP infrastructure programs that support food distribution organizations to refrigerate and distribute fresh foods.

We also must ensure that TEFAP provides diverse and inclusive food options for all Americans in need. In 2019, more than 44,900,000 immigrants lived in the United States, making up nearly 14 percent of the total United States population.⁷ Numerous TEFAP users require culturally, ethnically, or religiously appropriate foods, many of which are nutritious and produced in the United States. Therefore, the 2023 Farm Bill should include language urging USDA to actively seek input from local distributors on which foods should be added to the TEFAP available food list to provide a consistent source for diverse and impacted communities, as well as assistance to agricultural producers who offer these products.

College Student Food Security

Students are not strangers to the issue of food insecurity – nearly a quarter of students at the University of Connecticut reported concerns about food insecurity, and around 30% reported

⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations World Food Programme, & World Health Organization. (2022, July). The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2022. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0639en/online/cc0639en.html>

⁷ Hanna, M., Batalova, J., & Levesque, C. (2021, February 11). *Frequently requested statistics on immigrants and immigration in the United States*. Migration Information Source. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2020>

skipping meals to save money. At the national scale, a 2018 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that more than 30% of college students might face food insecurity and that almost 60% of potentially eligible students were not receiving SNAP benefits.⁸ The 2023 Farm Bill must ensure that eligible low-income college students are automatically enrolled in SNAP. Furthermore, Congress should increase the SNAP eligibility of low-income college students by expanding eligibility to students who qualify for work-study, have a \$0 Expected Family Contribution, meet the financial eligibility criteria for a maximum Pell Grant, or are an independent student whose household is otherwise eligible.

To better track hunger among college students, the 2023 Farm Bill must require the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report to Congress on the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) strategy to address student hunger and publish an updated State Outreach Plan Guidance. Furthermore, Congress should create a demonstration program to administer up to ten projects at the Institute of Higher Education to allow students using SNAP benefits to purchase meals at on-campus dining halls or retail stores.

SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot Program

In the 2023 Farm Bill, the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot program should be expanded to include retailers that already deliver meals to Medicare and Medicaid enrollees residing in rural areas or suffering from chronic disease. The 2014 Farm Bill required USDA to establish a pilot program testing the feasibility of SNAP beneficiaries using their benefits online with authorized retailers to have food delivered to their homes. Currently, the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot program does not permit the purchase of prepared foods using SNAP benefits. Congress should expand the pilot program to include home-delivered meal providers that already deliver meal benefits to Medicaid and Medicare enrollees in rural areas or those with chronic diseases. Extensive published research demonstrates that ensuring access to Medically Tailored Meals will lead to improved health outcomes, decreased healthcare utilization, and lower spending, especially for those individuals who suffer from certain chronic conditions and are food insecure. For example, a study published in JAMA in October 2022 concluded that national implementation of medically tailored meal programs for diet-sensitive conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease could be associated with approximately 1.6 million averted hospitalizations annually, resulting in lower overall healthcare utilization and annual net cost savings of about \$13.6 billion⁹.

Increasing Food Access in Underserved Communities

America's families should have access to healthy and nutritious foods. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Food deserts are becoming more prominent across the country and in my home state of Connecticut. Specifically, out of more than half a million food stamp recipients in the state, nearly 3,800 live in towns without retailers accepting SNAP payments. Congress must address this critical gap by ensuring that independent food retailers have the support they need to

⁸ United States Government Accountability Office. (2018, December). *FOOD INSECURITY Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits*. December 2018 Food Insecurity. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-95.pdf>

⁹ Hager K et al. "Association of National Expansion of Insurance Coverage of Medically Tailored Meals with Estimated Hospitalizations and Health Care Expenditures in the US." *JAMA Network Open*. 2022;5(10):e2236898. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.36898

feed American families. Specifically, the 2023 Farm Bill should increase funding for programs like the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) to ensure that food retailers can invest in underserved communities and increase access to healthy foods. We must also increase funding for nutrition incentive programs such as the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), which often helps local farmer's markets increase community access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

SNAP Expansion to the U.S. Territories

The 2023 Farm Bill presents an opportunity to expand nutrition assistance within the U.S. territories. For decades, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have been operating under the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Block Grant instead of SNAP. While SNAP's mandatory funding extends to however many people are in need, the NAP block Grant provides a fixed amount of federal spending that Congress authorizes each year. This has required the territory to set eligibility and benefit levels far below SNAP levels in the states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. This leaves residents in the U.S. territories of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands unable to provide benefits for growing numbers of eligible beneficiaries during economic downturns and natural disasters outside of disaster relief appropriations by Congress.

With high levels of poverty¹⁰, these U.S. territories cannot adequately meet the fluctuating nutritional needs of their constituents under the NAP Block Grant infrastructure. Therefore, Congress must meet the hunger demand across the territories and amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to transition the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to SNAP. Specifically, in consultation between the Secretary of Agriculture and the Governors of each of the territories, this transition should be done in a manner that allows each territory to implement eligibility standards, deductions, and benefit levels suited to the economic and social needs of its constituent.

Reduce Food Waste

Nearly 40% of the food produced in the U.S. goes to waste. This includes food thrown out due to needing clarification over the date printed on its packaging (date labels). Manufacturers use a variety of labels such as "best by" or "enjoy by" to show how long food will have the best taste. However, consumers may falsely believe these are expiration labels and throw out food that is still safe to eat.¹¹ While states regulate date labels for some foods, the 2023 Farm Bill presents the opportunity to end consumer confusion around food date labeling and ensure Americans do not throw out useable food. Congress should require USDA to work with the Food and Drug Administration to standardize date labels on food products.

¹⁰ Rosenbaum, D. (2021, November 5). Northern Mariana Islands to Receive Substantial Additional Food Assistance in a Move Toward Parity With Rest of U.S. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/northern-mariana-islands-to-receive-substantial-additional-food-assistance-in-a-move-toward>.

¹¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2019, September 9). *Date Labels on Packaged Foods: USDA and FDA Could Take Additional Steps to Reduce Consumer Confusion*. Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-407>

Conservation

Conservation is critical to any farming operation, preserving the land and natural resources for future generations. Implementing sustainable agriculture practices is also essential to the financial health of any operation, saving farmers money through reduced energy use, water use, and fertilizer use.

In the 2018 Farm Bill, Title II funding accounted for \$60 billion of the total projected cost, about 7% of the total authorized funding.¹² Congress must ensure that the Natural Resource Conservation Service's conservation programs have their financing preserved. The four most popular programs—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agricultural Easement Program (ACEP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)—are consistently oversubscribed. For instance, in FY 2020, USDA funded just 27% of eligible program applications received for EQIP and 35% for CSP.

Rising inflation makes this funding less impactful, and projections released by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) show that the new 10-year baseline will be approximately \$2 billion lower for Title II funds than the 2018 baseline. Therefore, in the 2023 Farm Bill, Congress should double baseline funding for Title II programs, which have demonstrated popularity. In addition, the 2023 Farm Bill should reflect the popularity of these programs by preserving their baseline funding and the *Inflation Reduction Act's* funding to ensure more producers can access these programs and improve their operations.

While increasing funding is critical, Congress should also act to increase the effectiveness of EQIP. Between 2009 and 2016, \$600 million, representing just 14% of all EQIP funding, went towards conservation practices that USDA identified as producing significant environmental benefits. Simultaneously, \$1 billion in EQIP funding was spent on practices that produced relatively little environmental benefits. Congress should ensure that EQIP funds go towards practices that benefit the environment by reducing cost shares for ineffective programs and prioritizing practices for awards that provide significant environmental benefits for water quality and soil health. Additionally, the overall five-year EQIP payment cap should be reduced from \$450,000 to \$150,000 to allow more small farmers to receive EQIP funding rather than concentrating federal funds in the hands of the largest operations.

Connecticut, and New England, routinely see less benefit from USDA programs than other parts of the country. The 2023 Farm Bill should serve all parts of the nation equally, and smaller states like Connecticut should not see fewer opportunities for federal assistance.

¹² Myers, S. (2023, January 13). Overview of title II conservation programs in the farm bill. American Farm Bureau Federation. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/overview-of-title-ii-conservation-programs-in-the-farm-bill>

Dairy & Livestock

The Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) Program has been the number one protection for Connecticut dairy farmers against milk price volatility. Continued funding in the 2023 Farm Bill for DMC is critical to my constituents and dairy farmers across the United States.

In 2020 and 2021, Americans across the country confronted empty shelves at the grocery store. Necessary precautions during the pandemic revealed the fragility of our food supply chains, as heavily consolidated meat processing facilities closed, and stores several states away could not stock their shelves. Congress must address the consolidation of food processing. The 2023 Farm Bill should expand support for small- to medium-sized processing facilities to insulate local and regional food supply chains from disruptions at extensive, centralized facilities via the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program.

Farm Safety Net

Congress correctly prioritized the needs of workers and small businesses when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many farmers experienced difficulties interacting with the Small Business Administration (SBA), an agency not equipped to respond to the specific needs of the agricultural sector. Congress must ensure farmers are well served in times of crisis. Furthermore, economic injury loan programs must be available with expertise in agriculture and farm business.

The 2023 Farm Bill should authorize new loan programs through the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to better serve farmers during economic crises. Specifically, it should include \$10 billion for direct loans through FSA, \$10 billion for a guaranteed loan program through FSA-approved lenders, and \$300 million for program administration and training for new staff.

Young, Beginning, & Underserved Farmers

In the 2023 Farm Bill, this Congress has the opportunity to address and correct historic discrimination within the federal agricultural policy. Alleged discrimination within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in federal farm assistance and lending has caused Black farmers to lose nearly 90 percent of their valuable farmland between 1910 and 1997. Without intentional change in lending with USDA direct loans, this pattern will only continue. Even in fiscal year 2022, Black farmers who applied for USDA direct loans were approved at lower rates and rejected at higher rates than any other racial demographic.

This Congress must create an independent civil rights oversight board to review appeals of civil rights complaints filed against USDA, investigate reports of discrimination within USDA, and provide oversight of Farm Service Agency County Committees. The 2023 Farm Bill should also protect remaining Black farmers from land loss and increase funding to provide Black farmers pro-bono assistance, succession planning, and support for the development of farmers cooperatives.

In 1920, there were nearly 1 million Black farmer in the United States. Today, it is estimated that there are less than 50,000 remaining Black farmers, making up less than 2% of all farmers. This means Black farmers have lost millions of acres of farmland and hundreds of billions of dollars of intergenerational wealth.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, of the nearly 3.4 million producers in the United States, 64% were male, and 95.4% were white. In addition, 73% of producers had 11 years or more experience farming, and more than a third were over 65.¹³ Younger generations are passionate about food production and are eager to be given a chance to start their own operations. However, it is increasingly difficult for them to get started for prohibitive land prices, student loan debt, and labor shortages.

While USDA provides loans for new farmers, these loan programs are limited in substantially assisting new farmers as costs continue to rise. The 2023 Farm Bill should adopt the proposals made by President Bidens in the FY 2024 budget to help beginning farmers, including the elimination of Direct Farm Ownership and Operating Loan limits, reduction of application and eligibility requirements for the Emergency Loan program, revising Beginning Farmer Funding targets to improve the timeliness of loan closings and reducing Direct Farm Ownership experience eligibility requirements. The 2023 Farm Bill should also adopt proposals to increase the Direct Down Payment Loan Program limit, double the Microloan limit, and open access to Beginning Farmer benefits to entities comprised of non-related individuals and expand mediation services to Territories and Tribes to serve a broader, more diverse population of farmers.

Land in Connecticut is the fourth most expensive in the country, contributing to new producers significant barriers to accessing land. Notably, women and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) farmers struggle to access the capital required to start a working farm, and obtaining a loan through the Farm Service Agency can be prohibitively slow. In comparison, commercial developers with access to private capital can quickly purchase land for development, removing it from production and potentially preventing it from ever being farmed again. Congress should support the Farm Service Agency's "Application Fast Track Pilot Program" to expedite the loan approval process and ensure that young, beginning, and underserved farmers, who rely on FSA for loans, are more competitive with commercial lenders when working to own their first farm.

The 2023 Farm Bill should direct USDA to establish a pilot program to make loans to alternative lenders, which typically take place through online platforms that use technology to bring together borrowers underserved by traditional lending institutions¹⁴. Alternative lenders can also offer farmers flexible loan terms, experience with distressed borrowers, and quick turnaround on loan

¹³ National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2017). 2017 Census of Agriculture Congressional District Profile, Connecticut Fifth District. USDA. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Congressional_District_Profiles/

¹⁴ Michlistch, K. (n.d.). An introduction to alternative lending. Morgan Stanley Investment Management. <https://www.morganstanley.com/im/en-us/individual-investor/insights/articles/an-introduction-to-alternative-lending.html>

applications compared to traditional banks¹⁵. Examples of flexible loan terms include but are not limited to, revenue-based repayment, interest-only loans during organic transition periods, and extended grace periods. Alternative lending also takes advantage of blended capital strategies where various financing mechanisms are combined, such as grants and equity, to create an appropriately structured package of financing that improves the long-term success of the borrower. Alternative lending can also offer business-aligned capital for non-conventional forms of production, such as diversified operations and direct marketing, as well as post-farm gate operations. Many alternative lenders also incorporate non-economic factors into their underwriting strategies, such as soil health, water quality, local food security, and social equity.

From Fiscal Year 2023 through Fiscal Year 2028, the Secretary will create a pilot to make loans to alternative lenders up to \$500,000 to make or guarantee microloans and provide business, financial, marketing, and credit management services to microloan borrowers. The Secretary shall determine whether a lender has the necessary legal authority, a proven track record of successfully assisting agricultural borrowers, and the services of staff with appropriate loan-making and servicing expertise. Recipients should also have a proven track record of offering flexible loan terms that assist historically underserved farmers and ranchers or advance soil health.

Rural Broadband

A 2018 study of the Northwest Corner of Connecticut found that only 79% of households had access to wired broadband service. Furthermore, only 20% had access to a kind of wired connection that does not meet the current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) definition for broadband – and is not upgradeable. Five years later, several towns in the Fifth Congressional District of Connecticut still lack broadband services. According to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (CTDEEP) 2022 Connecticut Broadband Report, the Northwest Corner of Connecticut is home to nine of the ten towns in the state with the highest percentage of unserved broadband locations.¹⁶

Access to reliable, high-speed internet is not a luxury but a necessity. Yet, despite the tremendous progress of the *American Rescue Plan Act* and the *Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act* in closing connectivity gaps. In the 2023 Farm Bill, Congress has the opportunity to ensure we all communities – particularly rural communities are connected. For this reason, Congress must expand access to broadband programs and ensure that their funding is being targeted to rural areas that need it most.

¹⁵ Laca, A.-L. (2018). The Pros and cons of alternative lending. Delivering the capital and commitment rural America deserves. <https://www.farmermac.com/pros-cons-alternative-lending/>

¹⁶ *Connecticut Broadband Report*. Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/energy/Broadband/DEEP_CT-Broadband-Report_FINAL.pdf

Conclusion

As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture, I am dedicated to the expansion of SNAP, funding TEFAP, aiding our hungry veterans, elevating new farmers, expanding conservation efforts, and bringing broadband to all communities. The Farm Bill has a long, bipartisan tradition, and I request we maintain this tradition of collaboration to address the significant issues in American agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. K. Hayes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on
Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture